IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 and 3, and add new claims 7 and 8 as follows.

1. (Currently amended) An exposure method comprising the steps of:

a) removing an unwanted deposited film from the surface of a photomask, a desired pattern having been formed in the photomask; and

b) exposing a resist film to extreme ultraviolet radiation through a demagnification optical system and the photomask, from which the deposited film has been removed, thereby transferring the desired pattern onto the resist film,

wherein the step of removing the deposited film from the photomask is performed at a location away from the demagnification optical system.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step a) comprises removing the deposited film using oxygen plasma.

3. (Currently amended) An exposure method comprising the steps of:

a) loading a substrate, on which a resist film has been formed, into a vacuum chamber;

b) removing an unwanted deposited film from the surface of a photomask having a desired pattern therein inside the vacuum chamber by using oxygen plasma that has been generated in the chamber; and

c) exposing the resist film to extreme ultraviolet radiation through a demagnification optical system and the photomask, from which the deposited film has been removed, thereby transferring the desired pattern onto the resist film,

wherein the step of removing the deposited film from the photomask is performed at a location away from the demagnification optical system.

4. (Original) An exposure method comprising the steps of:

a) removing an unwanted deposited film from the surface of a photomask having a desired pattern therein inside a first vacuum chamber by using oxygen plasma that has been generated in the first vacuum chamber;

b) loading a substrate, on which a resist film has been formed, into a second vacuum chamber;

c) transporting the photomask, from which the deposited film has been removed, in line from inside the first vacuum chamber to inside the second vacuum chamber; and

d) exposing the resist film to extreme ultraviolet radiation through the photomask inside the second vacuum chamber, thereby transferring the desired pattern onto the resist film.

5. (Withdrawn)

6. (Withdrawn)

7. (Newly added) The method of Claim 3, wherein the step of removing the deposited film from the photomask is performed after the photomask is moved to the location away from the demagnification optical system.

8. (Newly added) The method of Claim 3, wherein the step of exposing the resist film to extreme ultraviolet radiation is performed after the photomask is moved from the location away from the demagnification optical system to the locality of the demagnification optical system.